



UNITED STATES SENATOR · MICHIGAN
DEBBIE STABENOW
PRESS RELEASE



United States Senate · Washington D.C. 20510-2204 · (202) 224-4822
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 18, 2002

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U.S. Senate Passes Stabenow Amendment to Allow States to Lower Prescription Prices and Expand Coverage

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Senate today passed U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow's (D-MI) legislation to allow states the flexibility they need to lower prescription drug prices and expand coverage to those who need it most. The Stabenow Rx Flexibility for States Act (S.2536) makes it clear that states have the legal right to extend Medicaid rebates and discounts for prescription drugs to non-Medicaid eligible residents who do not have prescription drug coverage. It passed by a vote of 56 to 43.

"The passage of my Rx Flexibility for States Act is a big victory for the all of the senior citizens, families and state governments who are struggling with soaring prescription drug prices. Many states have developed innovative programs to help make medications more affordable. These programs can make a real difference in the lives of those who may otherwise not be able to afford needed medications," said Senator Stabenow.

"Unfortunately, the programs have faced a number of legal challenges by the pharmaceutical industry. My legislation gives these states the flexibility they need to provide prescription drugs to their citizens at reduced prices."

From 2000 to 2001, prescription drug prices rose 17 percent, causing health expenditures and health insurance premiums to go up rapidly. In an attempt to respond to these skyrocketing prices, 30 states have enacted laws providing some type of prescription drug coverage to those without insurance and many have developed prescription drug programs that provide individuals with immediate assistance. However, PhRMA, the pharmaceutical corporations' trade association, has mounted legal challenges against beneficial programs in several states to stop these discounts.

"Many prescription drug programs that could help seniors today are currently embroiled in costly legal battles with PhRMA. It is my hope that my Rx Flexibility for States Act will get these programs out of court and provide lower prices for those who need them most. In the face of soaring prescription drug prices, states should be able to do all they can to pass on Medicaid rebates to their residents. When prescription drugs are unaffordable, they are also inaccessible. And that is simply unacceptable," said Stabenow.